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Press Release

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Scam targets military spouses

HEIDELBERG, Germany – The American Red Cross and the Army's Community and Family Support Center are warning military spouses about an identity-theft scam that targets Family members of deployed troops.

The scam involves a person with an American accent calling a military spouse, identifying herself as a representative of the Red Cross, and telling the spouse that her husband was hurt in Iraq and was medically evacuated to Germany. The caller then says that doctors can't start treatment until paperwork is completed, and that to start the paperwork they need the spouse to verify her husband's social security number and date of birth.

American Red Cross representatives typically do not contact servicemembers or Family members directly and almost always go through a commander or first sergeant, said Deborah Goldberg of the Red Cross. Family members are urged not to release any personal information over the phone if contacted by unknown individuals, including confirmation that their spouse is deployed.

Additionally, Red Cross representatives contact servicemembers or their Families directly only in response to an emergency message initiated by a Family member. Plus the Red Cross does not report any type of casualty information to Family members; the Defense Department handles those matters.

It is a federal crime, punishable by up to five years in prison, for a person to fraudulently pretend to be a member of, or an agent for, the American Red Cross for the purpose of soliciting, collecting, or receiving money or material, according to organization officials. Any military Family member that receives such a call is urged to report it to their installation Family readiness group or military personnel flight.

(Information provided by American Forces Press Service)

The U.S. Army Installation Management Command, Europe Region (IMCOM-Europe) is one of six regional offices created Oct. 24, 2006, (formerly known as Installation Management Agency) as part of an Army-wide initiative to focus management of Army installations around the world under one organization. IMCOM-Europe is responsible for all facets of support for U.S. Army Soldiers and families in Europe from drivers' licenses to child care to force protection. As the landlord for all U.S. Army facilities in Europe, IMCOM-Europe is responsible for infrastructure and continuing the Army's strong commitment to environmental protection. Its higher headquarters is located in Arlington, Va.